

armed and arming, ready to spring at each other's throats. . . In the interests of the Zionist policy, all elective institutions have so far been refused to the Arabs, and they naturally contrast their treatment with that of their fellows in Mesopotamia.

It seems to me that the whole situation should be reviewed by the Cabinet.⁸⁰

In their first memorandum to Churchill the Delegation reiterated the Palestinian national demands⁸¹ and during the second half of August, the Delegation had two lengthy interviews with Churchill and Major Young of the ME Department. Churchill stressed that he was receiving them as an unofficial body and that as long as they insisted that the Balfour Declaration should be repudiated there was nothing to say. The Declaration, he argued, had to be carried out, and the Arabs must accept the fact.

But they could see that it was not carried out in a manner to injure the Arabs, and try and find some basis for a friendly arrangement for the next few years.⁸²

The Delegation submitted that while they still had confidence in the British Government and their sense of justice, they felt that Palestinian rights were being carried away. They had to come to London to discuss the root of the problem — the Balfour Declaration — with those who could bring about a change of policy. When the Delegation entered into a discussion of ways and means of protecting Arab rights and interests, Churchill made it quite evident that any representative elective assembly or council would have no power over the control of immigration or any other matter that was vital to the implementation of the JNH policy. Thereupon, the Delegation declared that the two parts of the Balfour Declaration were irreconcilable as Zionism was incompatible with Arab rights.

On the following day the same stumbling blocks were encountered, and Churchill pressed on the Delegation to meet Weizmann and other Zionist leaders, to see if they could work out an agreement under the auspices of the Colonial Office. The Delegation were unwilling to accept this particular suggestion as they did not recognise Weizmann and the Zionist Organisation. Besides, 'The people of the country do not wish us to parley with them. They sent us to the Government'.⁸³ Churchill insisted that the Delegation should take up his suggestion and convince him that they were making an effort to come to an agreement as a

preliminary condition to arranging an interview with the Prime Minister. The Delegation asked that they be given the opportunity to consult with each other before answering Churchill's request.

Before the Delegation could decide on its course of action in London, the High Commissioner summoned twenty-nine members of the 'Moslem and Christian Consultative Committee' to a meeting in Jerusalem in an apparent effort to undermine the position of the Delegation in London. The declared aim of the meeting was to invite the Palestinian Arabs to express their views on the terms of the impending Constitution being prepared by the British Government. The spokesman for those present replied that it was premature to consider a constitution at all since the status of the country had not been settled, that they could not in any case approve a constitution embodying the Balfour Declaration, and that the Delegation then in London was the body to be consulted on these matters.⁸⁴

Apart from informal conversations between Shuckburgh, Head of the ME Department and individual members of the Delegation, there were no formal contacts between the Delegation and the Colonial Office from 1 September to 15 October. In the course of these conversations Shuckburgh found the Delegates agreeable but non-committal. Although offended by Churchill's suggestion that they should get into communication with the Zionist Organisation, Shuckburgh gathered the impression that they would not be unwilling to meet the Zionists under official auspices at the Colonial Office.⁸⁵

On 24 October, the Delegation addressed a letter to Churchill which they wanted put before the Cabinet. In this letter they reiterated the fears of 93 per cent of the People of Palestine regarding Zionist policies and maintained that

The very serious and growing unrest among the Palestinians arises from their absolute conviction that the present policy of the British Government is directed towards evicting them from their country in order to make it a national state for immigrant Jews. . . The Balfour Declaration was made without (us) being consulted and we cannot accept it as deciding our destinies.

What they suggested, or demanded, among other things, was that

The Declaration should be superseded by an Agreement which would safeguard the rights, interests and liberties of the People of Palestine, and at the same time make provision for reasonable